

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

S E C R E T STATE 004125

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, US, XF, UN

SUBJECT: ITALIAN APPROACH RE EC "STRATEGY" FOR JANUARY
SC DEBATE ON ME

REF: (A) USUN 6987; (B) STATE 1044;
(C) USUN 0017; (D) USUN 0022

1. ITALIAN AMBASSADOR GAJA CALLED ON ASSISTANT SECRETARY
ATHERTON JAN 6 TO SOUND OUT USG VIEWS RE IDEA OF PRE-
EMPTIVE DRAFT SC RES (REFTELS) WHICH HE SAID IS NOW BEING
DISCUSSED AMONG EC DELS IN NEW YORK. GAJA SAID THAT BEFORE
DECIDING WHETHER TO MOVE AHEAD ON SUCH A DRAFT BY SHOWING
IT TO OTHER SC MEMBERS, ITALIANS AND OTHER EC MEMBERS ARE
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ANXIOUS TO OBTAIN OUR REACTIONS TO IT. GAJA FREQUENTLY

STRESSED DESIRE TO AVOID INTERFERING IN OR OTHERWISE COMPLICATING ME PEACE-MAKING PROCESS, BUT HE MADE CLEAR THERE IS CONSIDERABLE FEELING AMONG EC DELS IN NY THAT SOME KIND OF PREEMPTIVE RES WILL HAVE TO BE PUT FORWARD IN CONNECTION WITH UPCOMING SC DEBATE.

2. ATHERTON REMARKED THAT WE HAVE NOT SEEN TEXT OF ANY SUCH DRAFT RES TO DATE, ALTHOUGH WE HAVE HEARD RUMBLINGS FROM NEW YORK ABOUT IT. GAJA SUMMARIZED DRAFT TEXT BY SAYING IT WOULD REAFFIRM SC RESES 242 AND 338; CALL FOR A

PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT TO BE ACHIEVED IN ACCORDANCE WITH PRINCIPLES CONTAINED IN THOSE RESES WHICH WOULD BE SPELLED OUT IN RESOLUTION; AND CONTAIN FINAL PARAGRAPH URGING THAT "PALESTINIAN IDENTITY" SHOULD BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN ANY ME SETTLEMENT. LATTER PROVISION, HE NOTED, REFLECTS SIMILAR STAND ADOPTED BY EC MEMBER-GOVTS SEVERAL WEEKS AGO.

3. ATHERTON TOLD GAJA HE WAS UNABLE TO PROVIDE DEFINITIVE OFFICIAL REACTION TO IDEA OF PREEMPTIVE RES, SINCE U.S. POSITION RE UPCOMING SC DEBATE IS STILL UNDER CONSIDERATION, CONSULTATIONS WITH OUR MIDDLE EAST AMBASSADORS ARE STILL UNDERWAY, AND DISCUSSIONS HERE WITH ISRAELI FONMIN ALLON ARE NOT DUE TO TAKE PLACE UNTIL WEDNESDAY AND THURSDAY, JANUARY 7 AND 8. UNTIL WE FINISH THESE CONSULTATIONS, OUR THINKING RE TACTICS AND STRATEGY FOR SC DEBATE WILL NOT BE CRYSTALIZED. ATHERTON FURTHER NOTED THAT U.S. ACQUIESCENCE IN HOLDING THIS SC MEETING HAD STEMMED FROM PROCEDURAL, RATHER THAN SUBSTANTIVE, CONSIDERATIONS. HIS RECENT VISITS TO VARIOUS ME CAPITALS HAD MAINLY BEEN FOR PURPOSE OF EXPLAINING OUR APPROACH TO SC DEBATE IN ORDER TO MINIMIZE MISUNDERSTANDINGS ABOUT OUR POSITION. OUR POSITION IN BRIEF IS THAT ANY RESOLUTION EMERGING FROM SC DEBATE SHOULD NOT ALTER CURRENT NEGOTIATING FRAMEWORK BASED ON SC RESES 242 AND 338, AND THAT WE WOULD BE OBLIGED TO OPPOSE DIRECT OR INDIRECT ATTEMPTS TO CHANGE THAT FRAMEWORK IN ANY SUBSTANTIVE WAY. ON PALESTINIAN ISSUE, ATHERTON SAID OUR VIEW HAS ALWAYS BEEN THAT THERE
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CAN BE NO ME SETTLEMENT WITHOUT TAKING PALESTINIAN INTERESTS INTO ACCOUNT, BUT THOSE INTERESTS MUST BE DEALT WITH IN CONTEXT OF NEGOTIATING PROCESS -- AND NOT PREJUDGED IN OTHER FORUMS SUCH AS UNSC.

4. GAJA POINTED OUT THAT DRAFT SC RES NOW UNDER DISCUSSION AMONG EC DELS IN NEW YORK WOULD MAKE NO REFERENCE TO PLO OR TO PALESTINIAN PARTICIPATION IN NEGOTIATING

PROCESS, BUT WOULD SIMPLY STATE NEED TO BRING ABOUT PALESTINIAN COOPERATION WITH THAT PROCESS. ATHERTON STATED THAT THESE KINDS OF ELEMENTS COULD ONLY BE SEEN AS MODIFYING FRAMEWORK FOR NEGOTIATIONS LAID DOWN IN RESES 242 AND 338. HE FOUND IT DIFFICULT TO ENVISAGE WHAT FURTHER ELEMENTS SC MIGHT ADD AT THIS JUNCTURE THAT WOULD AVOID MODIFYING SC RESES 242 AND 338. HE AGAIN EMPHASIZED THAT THESE ARE MATTERS WHICH PARTIES DIRECTLY INVOLVED MUST COME TO GRIPS WITH IN CONTEXT OF FUTURE NEGOTIATIONS. FOR SC TO PREJUDGE DECISIONS OF NEGOTIATING PARTIES COULD HAVE ADVERSE EFFECT ON ENTIRE PEACEMAKING PROCESS.

5. GAJA NOTED ARABS ARE LIKELY TO INSIST ON AN SC RES THAT CONTAINS SOMETHING MORE SUBSTANTIAL ON PALESTINIAN ISSUE. EC DELS WANTED TO ASCERTAIN WHAT IF ANYTHING COULD BE DONE ALONG THOSE LINES IN ORDER TO AVOID UNFAVORABLE OUTCOME IN SC. ATHERTON REPLIED THAT WE SHARE DESIRE FOR CONSTRUCTIVE OUTCOME AND THAT WE ARE NOT ENTERING SC DEBATE WITH OUR MINDS TOTALLY MADE UP ABOUT HOW TO ACHIEVE THIS. AT THIS POINT, HOWEVER, WE BELIEVE AN SC RES THAT ELABORATES OR EXPANDS THOSE ELEMENTS ALREADY EMBODIED IN THE NEGOTIATING FRAMEWORK WOULD EFFECTIVELY ALTER THAT FRAMEWORK. GAJA SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THIS ATTITUDE, WHICH HE SAW AS REFLECTING A TACTICAL U.S. DESIRE TO AVOID GIVING AWAY ANY BARGAINING POINTS BEFORE THE SC DEBATE ACTUALLY GETS UNDERWAY. ATHERTON REJOINED THAT OUR POSITION IS NOT RPT NOT TACTICAL AND THAT WE ARE NOT WITHHOLDING ANYTHING IN DESCRIBING OUR POSITION AT THIS TIME. GAJA SUGGESTED THAT USG AT SOME POINT IN UPCOMING SC DEBATE MAY WISH TO FALL BACK ON IDEA OF EC PREEMPTIVE RESOLUTION AND REPEATED THAT SECRET

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EC MEMBERS WANT ONLY TO BE HELPFUL. ATHERTON SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THIS AND WOULD REPORT GAJA'S APPROACH TO SECRETARY KISSINGER IN DETAIL.

6. GAJA THEN HANDED ATHERTON A REPORT OF A RECENT CONVERSATION BETWEEN PLO'S FAROUQ QADDUMI AND ITALIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL IN ROME, NOTING THAT IT CONTAINED INDICATIONS OF A RELATIVELY MODERATE PLO POSITION RE ME PEACEMAKING PROCESS. ATHERTON REMARKED THAT MAIN OBSTACLE IN THIS REGARD IS PLO'S UNWILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT SC RESES 242 AND 338 AND TO COMMIT ITSELF POSITIVELY ON TWIN QUESTIONS OF COEXISTENCE WITH ISRAEL AND ACCEPTANCE OF ISRAEL'S EXISTENCE. UNTIL PLO OVERCOMES THESE OBSTACLES, HE SAID, IT WILL BE DIFFICULT TO ASK ISRAEL TO ACCEPT PLO AS VALID NEGOTIATING PARTNER.

7. IN RESPONSE TO GAJA'S QUERY ABOUT WHETHER ISRAELIS MIGHT YET BE PERSUADED TO PARTICIPATE IN UPCOMING SC DEBATE, ATHERTON SAID WE REGARD SUCH PARTICIPATION AS VERY UNLIKELY. HE NOTED ISRAELI CABINET ONLY TWO DAYS AGO HAD CATEGORICALLY REAFFIRMED GOI'S REFUSAL TO TAKE PART. ATHERTON ADDED THAT WE HAVE TOLD ISRAELIS WE DISAGREE WITH THEIR ATTITUDE, BUT THAT THERE SEEMS LITTLE POSSIBILITY THEY WILL CHANGE IT IN VIEW OF INTENSE FEELING ON THIS SUBJECT IN ISRAEL.

8. IN PARTING, GAJA REITERATED HIS GOVT'S DESIRE TO PLAY HELPFUL ROLE IN CONNECTION WITH SC DEBATE AND FUTURE ME

PEACEMAKING EFFORTS. HE AGREED WITH ATHERTON'S VIEW THAT CARE MUST BE TAKEN TO ENSURE AS FAVORABLE AS POSSIBLE AN ATMOSPHERE FOR BOTH. ATHERTON TOLD GAJA WE WANT TO STAY IN CLOSE CONSULTATION WITH EC DELS IN NY AS SC DEBATE APPROACHES. KISSINGER

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